COST OF LIVING

67. Mr. V. J. Mathai *(Planters):* Will Government be pleased to state.—

(*a*) whether the cost of living has gone up and if so how many times the pre-war level;

(*b*) whether the Dearness allowance granted to low-paid Government Officers is adequate;

(*c*) whether Government will increase the Dearness allowance already sanctioned;

(*d*) whether Government are aware that in Travancore Dearness allowances have recently been increased?

Mr. P. V. Raphael *(Comptroller of Finance and Accounts):*

(*a*) Yes. The working class cost of living Index No. for Madras City for August 1939, *i.e.*, just before the declaration of the war, was 98. For May 1943, the Index No. is 173·3.

(*b*) & (*c*) Government have now increased the dearness allowance from Rs. 4 to Rs. 6 so far as officers on a salary up to Rs. 60 are concerned.

(*d*) Yes.

LOAN TO SITARAM SPINNING AND WEAVING MILLS

68. Mr. C. V. Iyyu *(Kunnamkulam):* Will Government be pleased to state.—

(*a*) whether Government has ever given any loan to Sitaram Spinning and Weaving Mills, Ltd.;

(*b*) if so, when was it advanced;

(*c*) what was the terms if any in the mortgage deed as to the date of repayment and the rate of interest;

(*d*) whether the amount was paid back by the debtor Company;

(*e*) if so, when was it;

(*f*) whether Government had to use any coercive methods to collect this amount;

(*g*) if so, what;

(*h*) whether the managing Director of the Company of Mr. T. S. Balarama Ayyar was a Member of this House when the amount was paid back?

Mr. P. V. Raphael *(Comptroller of Finance and Accounts):*

(*a*) A loan of Rs. 3·50 lakhs had been given.

(*b*) In 1099.

(*c*) Half a lakh of rupees to be repaid on the last day of Karkadagam 1100 and the balance in annual instalments of Rs. 1·00 lakh on the last day of Karkadagam in succeeding years, interest also to be paid on the last day of Karkadagam every year. Rate of interest 7½ pe cent.

(*d*) Yes.

(*e*) The loan was completely repaid in 1111.

(*f*) No coercive method had to be used.

(*g*) Does not arise in view of answer to (*f*).

(*h*) Mr. Balarama Ayyar was a member of the Legislative Council when the amount was paid back.

CUT MOTION NO. 18 (*cont.*)

Rigorous Commandeering of paddy

***Mr. M. M. Paul** *(Director of Food Supplies):* The Hon'ble the mover of the cut motion raised some points by way of criticism. The first point that he raised was that our commandeering was a bit late. Now I have only to say that this commandeering of paddy is an important matter. The difficulty will be apparent from the fact that only in a very few places in India, this method has been adopted when owing to the acute scarcity of food stuffs the Government thought that it was necessary in public interests, as a necessary step the Government resorted to it.

The second point raised was with regard to the prevention of smuggling. The Hon'ble Member suggested that more effective methods might be taken to prevent smuggling to adjacent Travancore and British parts. Of course the suggestions given by the Hon'ble Member will be borne in mind and acted upon and I can assure the House that we are taking all possible steps to see that our paddy is being conserved for use in our State. Recently the Excise preventive staff has been strengthened for this purpose and special police arrangements are also being made

*Speech not corrected by the Hon'ble Member.

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in regard to the coming harvest on the boarders of our taluks to prevent the smuggling of paddy to Travancore and British parts. And even in the Supply Department there is a Special Inspecting Staff consisting of some members of the Police and Field Officers who are also moving about and trying to detect cases of smuggling. Any further steps that are necessary will be gladly taken by the Government. I can assure the House that there will be no stone unturned. We are as keen as the Hon'ble House that all possible paddy should be made available for distribution in our State under the rationing system.

The next point suggested was with regard to Notification No. 60 which requires that information about the harvesting of the crops should be given by the cultivators 7 days prior to the harvest to the Tahsildars or their deputies. I may inform the House that we have given further directions as regards this. The suggestion was that it is quite unsafe to entrust the deputies of Tahsildars with the power of giving any directions to the cultivators. Of course we realise the point involved in it. But I may point out to the House that ordinarily all important directions initiate from the Tahsildar only and his subordinates merely carry out the directions given by the Tahsildar. We have given strict instructions that in the working of this rule no unnecessary hardship is caused to the cultivator. When the whole scheme will be under the direct and immediate supervision of the Tahsildar, there is no scope for his deputies to play any mischief. I can also say that in cases where some mischief has been noticed, we have taken very severe disciplinary action (*Hear. Hear*)

The only other suggestion was with regard to the payment of wages to the labourers, and that was that as far as possible wages must be paid in kind. Instructions have been issued accordingly to the effect that where it is customary to pay the wages in kind, they may be paid in kind and that will be done also.

These are some of the constructive suggestions made by the Hon'ble Member. I have only to add that it is a scheme done on a large scale for the fist time in the State. We have worked to the best of our ability and we have also tried our best to secure as much paddy as possible and I think the House will not deny that on the whole it has been fairly a success. We have been able to secure fairly large quantities of paddy. We are certainly aware of the various defects and failings in the working of the scheme and in the next commandeering we will take advantage of the lessons we have learnt and try to purchase a comparitively larger amount of paddy. I am also glad to mention here that we have received the hearty cooperation of the public in this paddy purchasing work. It is with the co-operation of the publicr that we have been able to purchase whatever quantity we have got and I would appeal do the Hon'ble Members of the House to see that they themselves should do whatever lies within their power by creating public opinion and informing them of the utmost necessity of placing at our disposal all available surplus which we would utilise to the best of our ability by making an equ table distribution.

Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar *(Nellai):* Has the Government any idea of increasing price of paddy in the next collection.

Mr. M. M. Paul *(Director of Food supplies):* No idea at present.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkanchri):* Mr. President, By way of reply to what the Government has been pleased to say, I only wish to bring to your kind notice Sir the fact that we appreciate and rec gnise all that has been done by the Government in quite a novel matter like the food control and rationing. That is there. With that we also add that if the machinery for the collection of paddy is worked with the rigour it requires at the proper place—I have pointed out the other day where it is—and in selecting persons working in those areas true insight into human character is shown then much more than what is done now can be done. I am not prepared to say that I am satisfied with the answer of the Government touching that portion. It has been stated, Sir, the complaint of the mover being with regard to the work of the deputies, that though the work is being done by the deputies, the lower rungs in the ladder, the matter is initiated by the Tahsildar and therefore there is not much room for apprehension that anything will go amiss. While sitting at this distance, though the Director of Food Supplies is touring all over the State with all his vigour and stamina, I may say there are cases in which such things are bound to happen. I am not complaining about it. But see please that you send a better variety of persons, if necessary, by appointing a certain number of persons even on higher salaries so that they may not be tempted. Of course thereby let me not be understood Sir, as advocating the case of any M. L. C. as suggested by my friend from Cranganur, being sent there on an honorarium. I immediately repudiate the insinuation behind it by saying that if any M. L. C. is prepared to work it will be honorary work without an honorarium. I am prepared to take up the work of commandeering in five villages around

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Vadakkancheri for no remuneration at all. The only thing is that if anyone is found misbehaving, then, without turning to the right or left, sack him and prosecute him. That is my condition and only condition.

Mr. K. S. Panicker *(Ezhuvas-Mukundapuram)* : You want to squeeze these poor villagers.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkancheri)* : If the Hon'ble Member cannot follow our argument I can't help it. I will do as stated by me. I feel I have the strength and willingness to do it. I have the feelings all on the side of the tenant.

To continue the trend of my argument, in spite of the disturbance of my hon'ble friend, I was submitting, Sir, that men of sufficient mental and moral qualities with sufficient remuneration may be selected though it be at a high cost because the cause to be served is very great. It has been promised it will be done. Again I stress this point for the information of the Hon'ble Diwan President. So much with regard to the vigorous side of the cut.

Then one other thing. With regard to the equitable side of the cut, I am again not satisfied with the answer given by the Government. With regard to what is to be left to the "agriculturist, the rule is sufficiently elastic and therefore mischeavous. The words are sufficient for the domestic consumption of the cultivator". Then for his seed, then for his Valli, the wages. These are allowed by the order in question to be left to the cultivator. Now on that point the reply of the Government was as vague as this portion of the order is elastic. That is how I put it. We the people of the villages are not aware of the instructions in that behalf as to what will be left with the tenant. The rule is sufficiently elastic and the answer was equally vague.

Mr. M. M. Paul *(Director of Food Supplies)* : These instructions have necessarily to be a little bit elastic. The requirements of each individual in each locality will vary. They have been definitely instructed that whatever is necessary for the consumption of the cultivator till the next harvest, and for purposes of seed and for valli and for any other special expenditure according to the custom of the country has to be allowed. Definite instructions have been given. I do not think it is vague.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkancheri)* : I am again sorry, Sir, that neither yesterday nor today I have been sufficiently understood. It may be due to the proper want of expression on my part. I will try to place once again before the Government a helpful suggestion. In working this rule the quantity to be left will vary from place to place and it is desirable that the quantity will be fixed on a certain principle. There will be no difficulty as regards seed. What will be the Valli for one parah of seed. That is a matter which has not been disclosed. That is a matter on which of course there is almost a uniformity with honourable exceptions. The cultivators may be made to know that for one parah of seed so many parahs of paddy will be allowed. There are several practices in several places with regard to this. വിത്താളംവള്ളി. That means as much charges as seed. വിത്തിരട്ടി വള്ളി. Twice the seed. There are areas where they require thrice the seed and at times four times the seed, especially in view of the scarcity of labour because of the Labour Units and other useful things that have taken very many out of Cochin. But in that behalf a definiteness is absolutely necessary. Why I submit to this House is that this is a matter to be worked out by the deputies of the Tahsildar. The Tahsildar in the very nature of things cannot be expected to go everywhere. He has a vast jurisdiction. There is only one Tahsildar in this behalf for one Taluk. He cannot be expected to fly to all places and even if he can fly he cannot reach all the places. If the cultivator knows for certain that for one parah of seed so much of paddy will be allowed for wages and so much of paddy per head for domestic consumption, then there will be no difficulty. If I know that for one parah I will get say, 4 parahs, I cannot be a dupe of this deputy of the Tahsildar however honest he may be. I am not attacking anybody. It is possible and it is taking place. Therefore, just to minimise it as far as possible the cultivator should be made to know of the wages in particular areas that he is entitled to get. If the deputy who comes there to work it out plays any trick the cultivator can take the matter to the proper authorities, now we do not know how much wages we can get. That is a matter which the Government should be pleased to look into with all the seriousness the proposition demands. The harvest is not a matter which will run into months. In our parts the harvest begins by the end of Karkadagam and the maximum time is one month. In Trichur and Talappalli I know the maximum period of harvest is one month commencing by the 1st of Chingam and being over at the latest by the 15th of Kanni. So you have to depend upon your deputies. Select the best men, make the provisions known to the cultivator so that he may not become the dupe of anybody. In fixing the quantity of wages give consideration to the local conditions and ascertain what was being obtained previous.

Then, as regards quantity allowed for domestic consumption if you allow them on the ration basis that you allow to others naturally you cannot expect the cultivator to work. That, I said

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yesterday, will be like killing the goose that lays the golden egg. Let not that foolish thing take place here. When considering the question of what is to be left for domestic consumption let it not be on the ration basis. Let it be sufficient to fill his stomach and enable him to work the fields properly.

Mr. President: That has been the rule throughout.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkancheri)*: Sir, there is no manner of criticism or insinuation. I am glad for the information. We do not know what it is. I would give out to this House that he has not been given so much. I had to interfere with vakkalaths and in certain cases without Vakkalaths and see that he gets at least 3/4th of his requirements for domestic consumption. The rule is here. In working it is not sufficiently honoured.

Mr. President: The Hon'ble Member's request to the Government was to make the commandeering of paddy more rigorous. Now he is saying that it is too rigorous.

Mr. Joseph Petta *(Adur)*: The resolution has been slightly amended and the word "equitable" has been added.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkancheri)*: Sir, as far as commandeering is concerned let it be more rigorous or most rigorous if possible. But as far as foling out for domestic consumption is concerned let it be more equitable. My complaint is that the working of the rule is not equitable. The rule is good. It may be worked out properly is my prayer.

In the light of the Government's helpful and willing and earnest attitude exhibited not only in the answer but in the faces of every member, there and as I find that the Hon'ble President has been pleased to note of the suggestions I do dot wish to press this motion to a division. I pray I may be permitted to withdraw.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn

Demand for Rs. 13,67,843 under 39 Miscellaneous put and carried

Demand for Rs. 70 under 21 Miscellaneous—Cranganur—put and carried

29. Public Works—Rs. 16,31,431

Mr. V. K. Aravindaksha Menon *(Chief Engineer)*: Sir, I move that a sum of Rs. 16,31,431 may be granted under 29 A. and B "Public Works".

The policy governing the framing of this budget has been largely based upon the special conditions prevailing in our State at present. The need for producing more food has laid emphasis on works of irrigation. The difficulty of getting labour and the high price to be paid for it and for materials has necessitated the increased demands for maintenance of communications. Buildings come last and the test of inescapability criterion has been applied rather sharply.

In our scheme of works of 1118 we have started the investigation of the Chalakkudi Irrigation project and the extensive surveys connected with it have just been completed. The scheme proposed is a large one and the surveys done in connection with it by our officers had also to be very extensive. You may gain some idea of the extent of the investigation if I say that it included a complete soil classification of sixteen villages and complete levelling and plotting of the entire area covered by these villages. This area is nearly seventy square miles. The Villages included in the scheme are—

1. Pariyaram, 2. Mattathur, 3. Perambra, 4. Kizhekke Chalakkudi, 5. Kodasseri, 6. Kodakara, 7. Potta, 8. Elinjipara, 9. Kollithurkara, 10. Alathur, 11. Aloor, 12. Kuruvilasseri, 13. Thazhakad, 14. Annallur, 15. Vadakkumbhagam and 16. Kallur Thekkummuri.

We have now collected records giving the exact heights of every square inch, so to speak, of land in this 70 square miles and this information is essential before any scheme of irrigation of any magnitude can be properly designed. The benefits which will be derived from this scheme are also great.

The paramba wastes including porambokes to the extent of 713 acres fit for conversion to double crop wet lands will be about 11,000 acres in extent. Virippu lands which can be converted to double crop will be about 4,000 acres in extent. So this scheme will bring under extra cultivation an area of about 15,000 acres besides indirectly benefitting about 6,500 acres of existing Mundakan lands in these villages.

It is not proposed to discuss now the details of the main and branch canals of the various irrigation structures proposed to be provided for the distribution of the systems nor do I think, it is expected at this stage. Anyhow I shall give the broad features of this scheme.

It is proposed to construct a low weir across the Chalakkudi river at a place called Thumbermuzhi, a short distance above Echipara. This will lead the water to a main canal

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